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SUBJECT: RULING PARTY WINS MAJORITY OF VOTES IN
AZERBAIJAN'S OCTOBER 6 PARTIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
REF: A. BAKU 1019

[1](#)B. BAKU 1044
[1](#)C. BAKU 1466

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 9, Azerbaijan's Central Election Commission (CEC) released the first results of the October 6 partial Municipal Elections. As expected, the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party won 60 percent of the votes, while independent candidates captured 36 percent. Total voter turn-out throughout the country was nearly 34 percent. In an October 6 press statement, CEC Chairman Mazahir Panahov said that the elections were fair and transparent, and that the CEC worked quickly to address the few complaints they received. Opposition parties Musavat and Azerbaijan National Independence Party also issued statements, saying that the elections were not democratic, while Yeni Azerbaijan Party announced that the elections met international standards. In an October 7 press conference, the Council of Europe - the only international organization to comment on the conduct of these elections, said that there was some improvement, but some serious irregularities remain in the electoral process. Azerbaijani law stipulates that the CEC has 20 days to review the protocols submitted by each polling station, after which official results must be announced. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) In an October 9 press statement, the CEC announced the release of the first results of Azerbaijan's October 6 partial Municipal Elections. Nationwide, the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party won approximately 60 percent of the votes. Independent candidates - many of whom are rumored to be pro-government - walked away with 36 percent. The remaining four percent was divvied up between small independent and opposition parties. A few candidates who listed themselves as members of boycotting opposition parties were elected, including four candidates alleging to be from the Popular Front Party (Ali Kerimli's party) and two candidates alleging to be from Azerbaijan Democratic Party (Lala Shovket's party). In addition, eight Musavat candidates are listed as having won, but because Musavat members - according to the party's decision - were supposed to run as independents, it is likely that more "independents" with close ties to Musavat actually won more seats.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Total voter turn-out throughout the country was nearly 34 percent - right in the middle of the CEC's projected 20 to 45 percent turn-out. Voter turn-out in each constituency ranged from 15.48 percent in Constituency 63 (Sayli/Sabirabad I) to 58.48 percent in Constituency 70 (Masali City). Per constituency, the turn-out does not seem to directly correlate with the number of candidates, the number of seats, or the type of election (re-run elections, bi-elections, or new elections - see ref a). Official reports of voter turn-out generally track with numbers seen by the Embassy's observers.

[1](#)4. (SBU) In an October 6 press statement made before the

votes had been counted, CEC Chairman Mazahir Panahov said that elections were run in a fair and free, transparent manner. According to Panahov, the CEC had only received two complaints, which it immediately addressed. The complaints to which Panahov referred were among the complaints that had been relayed to the CEC from Embassy observers via Poloff. While the CEC did address these two complaints quickly, it has not yet responded to complaints received from the more than 9,000 registered local observers. Azerbaijani law stipulates that the CEC has 20 days to review the protocols submitted by each polling station, after which official results must be announced. Given Azerbaijani law, as well as the fact that most instances of observed fraud and irregularities took place during the vote counting and tabulation process, Panahov's assessment of the elections as free and fair strikes us as premature.

15. (U) Although Musavat did not officially participate in the Municipal Elections, Deputy Chairman Arif Gajily came out with an October 9 statement saying that the elections "were not democratic and the results were falsified." According to Gajily, Musavat had been informed about the "deliberate lengthening of voters' lists." Opposition Azerbaijan National Independence Party also made a press statement, saying that "the elections were not democratic and (the party) does not recognize the results." In stark contrast, the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan Party announced on October 6 that the elections met international standards, and that their 4,500 observers did not notice any violations of the election code.

16. (SBU) In an October 7 press conference, the Council of Europe (COE) - the only international organization to comment on the elections - said that there was some improvement in the technical aspect of the electoral process, but that some

serious irregularities remain. Specifically, the COE said that there is still much to do to raise the level of trust and respect between central and local administration. While two technical experts from OSCE/ODIHR observed the elections, ODIHR does not plan to issue a public statement on these partial elections. In general, observations made by the COE and ODIHR generally tracked with those made by the Embassy's observers - that the electoral process was relatively smooth, with some minor procedural problems.

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